



Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

November 3, 2009

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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: John F. Schunhoff, Ph.D. 
Interim Director

SUBJECT: **SEASONAL FLU/H1N1 PREPAREDNESS**

The Department of Health Services (DHS) is actively preparing to address any potential acute and unpredictable health threats posed by the H1N1 or seasonal flu.

DHS has developed a system-wide Flu Task Force which is currently meeting on a weekly basis. The committee is comprised of clinical and administrative staff from key areas of infection control, employee health services, pharmacy affairs, inpatient services and ambulatory care. The membership is charged with identifying and implementing evidence-based best practices that will serve to mitigate against a potentially severe flu season.

Key areas of action planning include updating and reviewing all hospital Flu and Operational Area Plans, DHS employee vaccination policies and status, pharmacy procurement of antivirals, vaccine distribution and prioritization, Personal Protective Equipment (masks) policies, antiviral and ventilator stockpiles, coordination efforts with the Department of Public Health and the Emergency Medical Services Agency and updating DHS communication plans and protocols.

HOSPITAL PLANS

DHS is updating and enhancing its enterprise-wide response plans based on this year's impact projections for H1N1 and the seasonal flu for Los Angeles County. The plans are being revised to reflect the most relevant Federal, State, and Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations for preparedness. Each hospital's network (the Multispecialty Ambulatory Care Centers, the Comprehensive Health Centers and Health Centers) has flu plans detailing the various policies, processes, and procedures for a coordinated response.

The updated plans cover essential areas such as: hand hygiene/cough etiquette, patient/employee vaccination policies, influenza patient management, staffing/human resource preparation, infection control policies and procedures, ensuring adequate medical equipment and supplies, data collection for influenza-like illnesses, tracking and reporting, active screening guidelines at facility entrances for employees, patients and visitors, mask-wearing policies, visitor restrictions and internal and external communication plans.

DHS EMPLOYEE VACCINATIONS FOR H1N1 AND SEASONAL FLU

Vaccination of healthcare workers (HCWs) is being coordinated by each hospital network's Employee Health Services (EHS) Unit. Mandatory vaccination of HCWs is not required in the State of California. However, employees must sign a declination form and indicate the reason for not taking the vaccine. DHS has developed a standard declination form that is used by all DHS facilities. EHS is increasing efforts to encourage all HCWs to get vaccinated, providing vaccines at staff meetings, conducting in-house flu clinics, and making rounds on different units utilizing flu carts. An Influenza report has been developed and is submitted weekly to the Chief Medical Officer to monitor the effectiveness of staff outreach.

Attachment 1 outlines the number of employees and doses administered of seasonal and H1N1 vaccine in each hospital cluster.

PHARMACY SERVICES VACCINE AND ANTIVIRAL PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION

The Office of Pharmacy Affairs is actively ensuring that sufficient supplies of the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine are secured for DHS. Sixty thousand doses of seasonal flu vaccine were ordered with approximately 85% received as of October 20, 2009.

The initial estimate of H1N1 vaccine projected to be available has been reduced twice by the Federal Government. As of October 30, 2009; DHS has received 18,200 (16%) doses of H1N1 vaccine, out of 111,000 ordered. In addition, another 65,000 doses were ordered on October 30, 2009. DHS follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for risk group prioritization. All DHS facilities have provided information on the total number of employees for whom vaccination is recommended, and have prioritized high risk employees based on the availability of vaccine, the CDC guidelines and patient care needs. To ensure an adequate health care workforce to serve DHS patients, the department is focusing on vaccinating targeted patient care employees first. However, some high risk patients are also being provided the vaccine as available and clinically indicated.

The Office of Pharmacy Affairs has also increased onsite pharmacy orders for Oseltamivir (Tamiflu), an oral anti-viral drug utilized for patients who require treatment for the H1N1 flu. DHS' Core Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee has approved a prior authorization form for providers requesting oseltamivir treatment to ensure that the limited doses available of this agent are utilized primarily in high risk patients or employees exposed to an H1N1 case.

OPERATIONAL AREA PLANNING

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency, the division responsible for overseeing medical response and coordinating the federally funded Hospital Preparedness Program, has been working with public/private hospitals, clinics and emergency medical services provider agencies (fire departments and ambulance companies) to ensure seasonal flu planning includes all partner organizations. Planning activities have focused on access to key resources such as masks, antivirals and ventilators as well as medical surge planning. The medical surge planning is done by each individual hospital and integrated under the Disaster Resource Center (DRC) program which divides the County into ten geographical regions and assigns one or two hospitals to coordinate preparedness activities with the surrounding healthcare providers. The Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) is another key partner included in these planning activities that assists us in coordinating with hospitals in its organization.

In 2007, Pandemic Influenza guidance documents were developed and distributed to hospitals and EMS provider agencies. These documents are being reviewed and will be updated based on the emergence of the H1N1 virus.

Mask and Antiviral Stockpile

Federal grants managed by EMS and DPH have funded the purchase of over one million N95 masks and over two million surgical/procedure masks that have been stockpiled for the public/private hospitals, clinics and emergency medical services providers. A stockpile of antivirals was also established.

EMS has developed a distribution methodology for hospitals, public/private clinics and emergency medical services provider agencies. In May 2009, fifty percent of the antiviral stockpile was distributed to hospitals to ensure a base amount available to treat hospitalized patients. DPH also received twenty-five percent of Los Angeles County's distribution of antivirals from the Strategic National Stockpile.

In July 2009, additional funding specific to supporting seasonal flu preparedness and response was awarded to the EMS Agency. This funding will support vaccination efforts and medical surge activities at hospitals, public/private clinics and to purchase additional masks and antivirals.

Ventilator Stockpile

The Hospital Preparedness Program, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program and Homeland Security Grant Program provided funding for the 13 hospitals designated as DRCs to purchase 25 ventilators each and four non-DRC Trauma Centers to purchase five ventilators each to increase the overall supply of ventilators in the County. Additionally, the EMS Agency has a vendor-managed cache of 113 ventilators that would be made available if needed. The State and Federal government also have stockpiles of ventilators and these could be requested to support the medical response in addition to Los Angeles County's existing resources.

COMMUNICATION

DHS facilities have begun implementing their pandemic/risk communication plans to get accurate and updated information on H1N1 to patients and visitors. Respiratory hygiene and H1N1-specific signage is being placed in key hospital and clinic traffic areas, and additional signage needs for special flu clinics and triage areas are being assessed and developed. Multi-lingual fact sheets developed by DPH are being disseminated to staff and visitors and posted on the DHS website, and staff forums are being planned at all DHS facilities. Additionally, facility Public Information Officers are participating in regular conference calls with other statewide public hospital communications staff on messaging strategy and best practices.

H1N1 activity and vaccination updates from the DHS Chief Medical Officer are being distributed to department staff on a regular basis, in addition to DPH news updates. DHS is currently including H1N1 messaging on system-wide information/appointment phone lines through a link to County 211. The facilities are also broadcasting H1N1 educational videos in patient waiting areas. To effectively prepare its experts to discuss flu activity and prevention, the department also conducted two media training sessions the week of October 19 for key facility-based clinical spokespersons.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH COORDINATION

DHS is also assisting DPH's efforts by asking health facilities for available nurses to work in the Points of Distribution (PODs). To date, about 200 DHS nursing staff have signed up to assist DPH. EMS staff are also deployed to DPH's Departmental Operations Center to ensure coordination in the H1N1 response, particularly connectivity to hospitals with emergency rooms and paramedic services.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Robert Splawn, Interim Chief Medical Officer at (213) 240-8116.

JFS:RS:pm

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director and Health Officer, Department of Public Health

DHS Flu Vaccination Status for Healthcare Workers - All Facilities
Seasonal Flu and H1N1 Vaccine
Date: 2-Nov-09

		Seasonal Flu Vaccine						H1N1 Vaccine					
		County Employees-Target Number	# vaccinated	# declined vaccine	Contract - Volunteer-Student Staff-Target Number	# vaccinated	# declined vaccine	County Employees-Target Number	# vaccinated	# declined vaccine	Contract - Volunteer-Student Staff-Target Number	# vaccinated	# declined vaccine
Northeast	LAC+USC Med Center	8,305	3,125	1,794	2,189	1,223	232	8,305	1,190	108	2,189	367	0
	Roybal CHC												
	Hudson CHC												
	El Monte CHC												
Metrocare	Harbor/UCLA Med Center	5,130	2,443	229	1,477	551	29	5,130	1,234	23	1,477	175	1
	Long Beach CHC												
	MLK												
	Humphrey CHC												
Valley Care	Olive View Med Center	3,115	1,353	0	2,843	465	0	3,115	899	0	2,843	260	0
	Mid-Valley CHC/												
	San Fernando HC												
	High Desert HS												
RLA	Rancho Los Amigos NRC	1,429	779	492	600	211	9	1,429	181	625	600	0	0
	DHS Systemwide Total	17,979	7,700	2,515	7,109	2,450	270	17,979	3,504	756	7,109	802	1